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Pre-transcript introduction

Queer Out Here

[Queer Out Here](#) is an audio zine that explores the outdoors from queer perspectives. We bring together stories and soundscapes from around the world to hear how queerness intersects with and influences people's experiences of outdoor spaces and activities. You can read more about the zine on the Queer Out Here website: <https://www.queerouther.com>

Issue 07 link

If you've somehow stumbled across this transcript and want to find the audio file, it's available here: <https://www.queerouther.com/listen/issue-07>

Content notes

The pieces in Queer Out Here talk about many things related to being queer and the outdoors. This issue contains:

- Mentions of racism, homophobia, transphobia and violent threats
- Discussion of killing and butchering animals
- Mention of maggots (flyblow) in live sheep
- Description of bodily fluids (alpaca)
- References to the climate crisis and despair
- Mild wind distortion

If you have specific anxieties or triggers, check this transcript or ask a trusted friend to listen and give you feedback. Please let us know if there is something we've missed and we will add it to the show notes on our website.

Transcript

Introduction - Jonathan and Allysse - 0:00:00

[The audio fades in. We can hear small birds cheeping and the soft chiming of livestock bells and, in the background, some faint wind and traffic sounds.]

Jonathan: Hello! This is Queer Out Here, an audio zine that explores the outdoors from queer perspectives. I'm Jonathan -

Allysse: - and I'm Allysse! Welcome to Issue 07. Our optional theme for submissions this issue was "change", and we also changed things up a bit in the way we sourced pieces. Last issue, we said we wanted to feature more pieces by Black people, Indigenous people and other People of Colour. We did this by having a BIPOC-only submission window, by asking for suggestions for previously published work, and by looking ourselves for pieces to feature.

Allysse: - and I'm Allysse! Welcome to Issue 07. This time, we're coming to your ears with a different kind of issue - instead of opening for submissions, we tracked down pieces from other podcasts, radio shows, channels and albums to highlight some of the other great LGBTQIA+ outdoors content out there. The pieces range from agriculture to climate change, from a hike in Australia to literary discussions, and more. It was exciting to listen to pieces that addressed topics that had not often been covered in previous issues of Queer Out Here.

Jonathan: So, this issue is kind of a mixtape from us to you. We've only included extracts from these other shows, and although we'll try to give you a bit of context for each one, it's important to emphasise that these are small parts drawn from larger conversations. We really encourage you to check out the full episodes, which we've linked in our show notes. We're extremely grateful to all of the people who have agreed to be part of this issue: podcasters, music makers, YouTubers, filmmakers, farmers... Thank you!

Allysse: Of course, we couldn't include everything we'd love you to hear. We listened to a lot more than we're featuring while preparing for this issue. We strongly encourage you to check out the inspiration page over at our website at queerouther.com/inspiration. We've added a lot of content in both audio and video format. We've even broken it down per time so you can choose what to browse depending on how much time you have. Or, you can be like us and gorge on all the lovely outdoorsy queer content we've gathered!

Jonathan: You'll notice through this episode that Allysse and I have recorded our links in different places. Since the last issue, I've moved back to Australia, and I've been working on this issue on [Gunaikurnai Country](#). Occasionally our meetings have been interrupted by raucous cockies outside the window - and we thought recording our links outside might be a fun way to inject some more nature sounds into what might otherwise be a pretty talk-heavy issue. Let us know how you like the different format.

Allysse: As always, there's a bit of housekeeping to do. The pieces in Queer Out Here talk about many things related to being queer and the outdoors. This issue contains:

- Mention of racism, homophobia, transphobia and violent threats

- Discussion of livestock farming, including killing and butchering animals and mentions of maggots in live sheep
- Bodily fluids (specifically alpaca spitting in people's faces and mouths)
- References to the climate crisis and despair

If you have specific concerns or triggers, we have a full, searchable transcript linked in the show notes - or you could ask a trusted friend to listen and give you feedback before you dive in. And as usual, we also have lots more info about our contributors and their wonderful work on our website at queerouther.com

Jonathan: And now, on with the show...

Both: Let's get Queer Out Here!

[The sounds of bells and birds continue, gradually fading out as the following link fades in]

Link - Allysse - 0:03:15

[Sound of a suburban park with some birds and kids playing fades in over the sound of bells and birds. In the background we can hear some passing traffic.]

Allysse: Hello, this is Allysse, recording from my local park. There are children playing, being remarkably quiet. I was hoping for raucous, but hey, I'm going to record what I've got! There's a road in the distance that's always busy and behind me, in a little copse of trees, birds are singing. And I'm here to record the first link for Issue 07.

We kick off this issue with an interview of Dallas Robinson for the programme Queer the Table produced by the Heritage Radio Network - a show about the joyful, messy, radical magic that happens in spaces where queerness and food intersect. Dallas is a black lesbian land steward who started the Harriet Tubman Freedom Farm. In the expert [sic - excerpt] we have chosen to share here, ey go over why ey chose this name for the farm.

We have long wanted to include stories about agriculture and working with the land in Queer Out Here. It is an integral part of the outdoors but not one we've had the chance to feature very much. Farming has been an integral part of my childhood. Whilst I was not actively involved with farming the land, I spent most week-ends at my grandparents farm. So when I think of farming, those memories are what come to the fore - a traditional farm passed on from father to son, gradually modernised and scaled up to meet the demand of globalisation.

This, however, is not Dallas' experience. Farming for em is a conscious choice, a political act em [sic - ey] came to in response to globalisation and social justice. Dallas approaches the act of growing food as a form of healing for both the land and people. It is not simply a way to create cheap sustenance for the masses, but instead a way to connect to an overlooked history to Black farmers, and to heal our relationship to an abused land. Those principles run through the very root of the farm, including the choice of name.

[The background sounds of the park fade down as the next piece begins.]

The Harriet Tubman Freedom Farm - Dallas Robinson & Nico Wisler on Queer the Table - 05:33

Nico: So much of the way that you talk about your farm, it's deeply rooted in ancestral knowledge, this radical farming history, um, your farm's namesakes are Harriet Tubman and Fannie Lou Hamer. And I wonder, like, that sounds like you came up with that way back at [Soulfire](#). But do you want to talk about giving the farm that name and how that shows up day to day, now that it's, it's real?

Dallas: Yeah absolutely. I - the first thing about it is I love that people have to say Harriet Tubman's name so much when they're talking about the farm. I'm [indistinct] "Gotcha!" [Laughs] Which, it shouldn't be pulling teeth to say her name, she's amazing. Um, yeah, [Soulfire](#) like I said, intro-, we did this whole timeline thing and Fannie Lou Hamer came up a lot. And I think I was actually introduced to Fannie Lou Hamer at Soulfire, I don't think I knew about her beforehand. And what an amazing human being, like I was really blown away.

Harriet Tubman is someone I was much more familiar with. But it started to occur to me like Harriet Tubman had to know land like nobody else and Harriet Tubman was an astrologer and Harriet Tubman was an herbalist. She also baked great pies apparently! [Laughs] Um, and what, what a beautiful thing to think about - this Black woman in a time that wasn't considered a full human being was just like, "I believe so much in my skill set and my liberation that I refuse to abide by these laws." Like, "I'm gonna go and be a fugitive, y'all will just have to figure that out." That's, that's the level of ... abolition, liberation I want to operate at all times - especially with my own self talk. Like, it's so enormous and gigantic of a person to say, "Nah, and I'm coming back for my family, and I'm going to be one of the most successful, um, military commanders this country has ever seen." Like, what, what a history. Um. But I also want to push people to think about Harriet Tubman as a naturalist and an herbalist and, ah, a cook. Like, someone who had food skills that kept people alive and healthy.

Um. And then, Fannie Lou Hamer. I'm really honoured to exist in the South like - it, it doesn't really count but like by proximity I'm like, "Yeah Southern women all day!" Um. Fannie Lou Hamer is this really... I, I think of her as this incredible, um, specifically Black Southern experience, especially of our elders. I had a babysitter named Rosa who I loved dearly - and Rosa has passed on now, but she used to tell us when we were kids that she didn't finish school. She was sharecropping with her family. So I, I was raised in part by a woman who was a child and worked in cotton fields most of her life and then worked in the cotton mill when she was older. And that to me is so... It sends chills through my body to think about, this history is not history to me. Like, that's. Those were my formative years. Um, so when I heard about Fannie Lou Hamer's story I immediately thought of Rosa - and I'm getting very emotional right now. But, um... Just to think about being a six year old black girl and asked to work and then that's the rest of your life. Um, being, being in cotton fields and so poor. Yet having this amazing skill to store food over winter and feed yourself through that is the kind of endurance that I don't think we can afford - as Black people especially - to keep being so removed from. So I'm trying to honour Fannie Lou Hamer's work and the work of all those agriculturists and preservationists who fed people through very hard times - and still are.

And the Freedom Farm Cooperative, ah, my dream is to have the Harriet Tubman Freedom Farm be a cooperative-run farm in the future. I'd love it if it was very soon, because doing this solo is rough! But the, the freedom farm cooperative that Fannie Lou Hamer founded prioritised poor people and, and you had to be a poor member. It was mixed in terms of race - there were Black

members and White members in that part of Sunflower County. And I think that her adamant emphasis on poor people building power by being able to feed themselves, working land, using a skill that had been used against them for centuries and centuries, is just so gracious, and, or, or, like, graceful, and... it's ingenious! She knew if you can feed yourself no one can push you around. And that's the realest thing. We see it today, people keep talking about "food deserts" (I'm putting quotes around that). It's food apartheid. You are purposely living next to garbage and that's all you have to eat because someone knows that as long as your body is in a constant state of, you know, sickness and, and disease and unwellness, you're controllable. But I - I mean her vision is so, um, powerful and impactful and I really want to honour that.

And personally as someone with class privilege in this part of the South, I think that it's so important for me to [sigh] leverage and do the work I can to create anti-capitalistic both conversations and work in my class level. Like, um, I've been doing that work so hard in my family with my own mother, it's just like no we can't afford to have these kinds of Words and and ideas that are so anti-poor people. It's not... That is White supremacy and, not on my farm! So I'm excited to uplift and honour and, um, keep being inspired by these, these women and the collective, ah, liberation practice they, they put forth into the world.

Sweeper - Esther - 0:12:10

[Sound fades in. The chirping of many, many crickets creates a wall of sound. In the background a voice says, "It might be too loud, sweetie." The noise gets a little quieter.]

Esther: Hi, I'm Esther. I'm on Wurundjeri Country, ah, not far from where Five Mile Creek meets the Moonee Ponds Creek. One of my favourite things around here is it's not far from the suburb - and the river - Maribyrnong, which, ah, in Woi Wurrung language means "I can hear a ringtail possum". [Faint splashing sounds start fading in.] And we quite often see ringtail possums around here, and it's just lovely - we feel really privileged to live here. You're listening to Queer Out Here.

[Crickets fade out, to be overtaken by the splashing noises.]

Link - Jonathan - 0:12:50

[Regular splashing noises, from somebody walking in water. In the background, vehicles drive past on a road. A few faint bird sounds.]

Jonathan: Thanks, Esther. I'm, um, walking in the shallows of what's now known as the Ovens River, on the borders of [Taungurung Country](#), just outside Porepunkah. [Traffic noise and increased splashing.]

Our next couple of pieces come from the excellent podcast Country Queers, hosted by Rae Garringer. In particular, we're featuring excerpts of a few interviews from their series called "Ode to Sheep". And the sound of sheep is familiar to millions of people across the world. In my experience, most UK country walks will take you past at least one field of sheep, and here in so-called Australia huge flocks of merinos swarm over the paddocks. We had, um, sheep on the small farm where I grew up, [chuckles] including my sister and my long-suffering favourite called Mottle, who loved peanut butter sandwiches and tolerated my sister and I dressing her up in hats and coats to pose for photos. I remember once when we were rounding up the sheep down on the

river flats for shearing [sniffs] I was running to get them into the yard and I fell into a wombat hole! I loved the smell of Dad's clothes when he'd come back from hand-shearing, and how after playing with the sheep my hands would smell of lanolin... [Jonathan's voice merges with Rae's in the next piece.]

Ode to Sheep (Introduction) - Rae Garringer on Country Queers - 0:14:33

[Rae's voice fades in, merging with Jonathan's. The sound of water splashing continues to fade down as Rae starts talking.]

Rae: I loved how my hands would smell of lanolin after handling wool. I didn't love to spin and knit like my mum and sister - I found it boring - but I loved spending time with the sheep. I love how they'll freeze mid step when it starts to rain and stand motionless in the field waiting for the weather to pass. I remember summer nights that my sister and I would set up a tent in the yard and we'd try to imitate the voices of the sheep. Some of them had these deep, bass voices, and some have these really high pitched voices, sometimes they crack like they're going through puberty, some of them sound like they've been smoking for 50 years. I haven't lived with sheep in like 20 years, but there's still almost nothing as calming to me as the sight of a grazing flock out the window, and their soft voices coming across the pasture. The flip side is that every time I hear coyotes I still sit bolt upright in bed and feel panicked about where the sheep are, before remembering that I don't have any.

So this December, in the midst of my annual seasonal depression - which was made more stark this year by the intensity of spending an entire winter holiday season alone in my dark little house, in a dark little hollow [?] in eastern Kentucky - I came across a video on Twitter of a three or four year old British kid showing a sheep. For those who aren't familiar with livestock life, there are shows - for sheep, for pigs, for goats, for cows, etcetera - where both the animals and the humans are judged on various elements of their presentation, and the animals are judged on their physical build and characteristics and health. And you see this a lot at, like, state fairs, county fairs and such. But of course, like so many things, due to the Covid pandemic most of these types of events had been cancelled. And so this video was part of a virtual sheep show. The kid was adorable. The sheep stood taller than her. She walked it around on a short rope, told it to stand back and when her mum asked what kind it was, she said, "White," and then corrected herself and said, "Dorset," which is a breed of sheep that originated in Britain. I watched the video probably five times in a row, coz it was delightful and brought me great joy - and who the hell didn't need some joy in December of 2020?

And I thought that, despite being a lifelong radio listener, I can't remember *any* sheep stories that I've heard in audio form. Which is weird to me, because they have really incredible voices and sounds, and they're really cool animals. And so in the weirdness that is my life these days, I put a call out on Country Queers social media to see if any queer or trans shepherds wanted to talk to me on the phone about sheep and gender and stuff. I thought maybe a couple people would reply. (I often don't think things are gonna work with this project and I'm surprised that they do.) But instead I heard back from over a dozen sheep lovers across the US and Canada. And so over the past three months I've recorded a handful of phone calls, navigating bad internet or cell service on

one or both ends [faint splashing sound begins to fade in] with people in Colorado, in Iowa, in Washington State and in Manitoba and Ontario, Canada...

Link - Jonathan - 0:17:52

[Splashing noises of walking in waters continue to fade up. There is a lot less background noise than in the previous link - this is a different place.]

Jonathan: I'm back in the Ovens River, a little further upstream. And since I recorded my last link yesterday, I've learnt that this is also the traditional country of the [Jaitmathang People](#).

[Splashing]

The first Country Queers excerpt we're going to hear is part of an interview with Wesley Godden who, alongside his partner, raises sheep on Fairside Farm in Eastern Ontario in Canada. After Wes' introduction, we're going to cut towards the end of the conversation, where Wes discusses some of the issues he's grappled with in farming livestock, particularly for meat. [Sniff]

I really appreciate how Wes points out the impossibility of purity when it comes to farming, to food, to life. Ah, ethical food is an open-ended equation I am often running in my head - what am I eating, what were the conditions of its production, how has it been transported to my plate? It's not just about eating or not eating, using or not using, animal products - although as a vegetarian that is important to me - but it's also about how the land is treated in production, the people and animals and how they're involved in all the processes, how the environment is considered, and so on. We've had some really interesting discussions with Wes when emailing back and forth for this issue, and it's been great to talk with a farmer who is so thoughtful about the way he works with animals and with the land that Fairside Farm is on.

[Jonathan's voice changes slightly, this was recorded separately] And, on that note, I just wanted to add that the farm is on the unceded, unsurrendered territory of the [Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation](#).

[Water splashing sounds continue]

Fairside Farm - Wesley Godden & Rae Garringer on Country Queers - 0:19:51

[Sheep bleating.]

Wesley: Hi, this is Wesley. And, ah, welcome to the sounds of my farm. [Speaking to the sheep] Hi, girls!

[The sheep bleat in response.]

Wesley: How's it going today?

[More bleating. Wesley whistles and the sheep appear to respond again. The bleating fades down.]

[In the next paragraph, Wesley's voice is slightly unclear.]

Wesley: My name is Wesley Godden. Um I live in, ah, in Ontario in the, in the highlands of the Ottawa Valley. We moved from Toronto to the Ottawa Valley to raise sheep and actually be closer to nature. So, in 2016 we bought a farm up here and, um, and, and started a sheep farm. Originally I came from Singapore and, ah, in Singapore, such a developed country that you don't really have the space and the nature that you find up here in the north. After meeting my partner in, ah, 2000 we have always loved camping and loved nature and so that's why we moved up here.

[The audio changes to a different part of the conversation, and the voices are clearer.]

Rae: Well, I wanted to talk about sheep which is the original reason we're talking and now we're 45 minutes in and I haven't asked you about your sheep. [Both laugh] This is always my problem, I could talk, I could ask people questions all day! But um, so, you also raise a hair sheep, right, a hair breed?

Wesley: Yeah. Um, we chose hair sheep after quite an extensive research, because we wanted, ah, to raise sheep for food consumption. And so, being new to sheep and all, we didn't want to have the hassle of, um, having to shear them, having to find, ah, additional space or infrastructure set up to make sure that the wool's clean. But hair sheep, um, this breed [Katahdin sheep](#) is actually created in the USA from two different breeds of hair sheep - I think in the 50s. So it's still a relatively new breed of sheep. It's quite, it's quite used in the US but it's, it's getting more recognised now, even in, in Canada because of how u- utilitarian, ah, this breed is. Hair sheep in general has, uh, is more parasite resistant than wool sheep so that also caught my attention, Because we didn't want to have to - well, we didn't know much about how to keep sheep, so we didn't want to have parasites and all that stuff.

In the winter right now, they live in the hoop barn and, ah, and they're exposed to all of the elements. They can come in and out as they please, but they always choose to stay in the barn. But they develop, ah, an undercoat that's really thick, and they moult, moult it all off in, ah, in the spring.

Rae: Mm.

Wesley: I've trained the sheep so that they come with the call of my whistle -

Rae: Oh!

Wesley: Or my - yeah! It's, it's quite interesting. I'll, I'll whistle, I'll hit the grain bucket and you'll see them just charging at you [laughs]

Rae: Yeah, for that grain! [Laughs]

Wesley: Yeah. Yeah, that's why we don't have any, um, we don't have any herding dogs, because of how we train them.

Rae: Mm. Will they come when you whistle even if you don't have grain?

Wesley: Yep.

Rae: That's incredible! [Laughs]

Wesley: Yeah, because we, we have, we have a few leaders in the pack, in the flock, and it's those leaders that we train. So once those leaders actually start making their way, everyone else will start making their way towards us, too

Rae: Mmhm.

Wesley: They're very accepting of us going, handling their lambs, Some of them will bring their lambs to us to actually -

Rae: Oh that's so sweet!

Wesley: Yeah, to, to introduce us to them,

Rae: Ohh!

Wesley: Um. Especially a few of my favourite ewes, they will, they will come with their lambs and we'll pat them and I'll pat the ewes. And um... It's, it's quite interesting. We build a kind of friendship, you know, between, between species.

Rae: Mm. Are you sad then? Because it sounds like - You know I think sheep farmers have such different styles and ... often sheep are less, you know, they can be much more shy than goats especially if you have a large herd. But it sounds like you all have pretty, um, you interact with them a lot. And so did it take you a while to sort of get used to taking the lambs to market, knowing that they'll be for meat, or is that a sad process for you?

Wesley: I.. Before we... [sighs] Before we bought the farm, this was our, our main, I guess, our main hurdle that we had to cross. Because we had, we had to really think hard. Do we actually want to be producers, producers of meat animals? And do we have an issue with sending them off to slaughter for food? Um, it was a very hard decision for us to make, because, um, knowing how each animal has a personality... But in the end, we, we kind of got over that because we understood that, um, producing food also helps society. And anything that we eat, anything that we do, um, there is a life taken for the food that we eat. Even if it's a vegetable, even if it's a plant, we have killed something to eat that food, ah, or someone has killed something for you to eat that food.

It doesn't have to be an animal. For example, if you are, if you are to eat romaine lettuce, for example, and um, having to till the ground, or having to kill some bugs, just so you get that, that romaine lettuce on your table - someone has killed something so that you survive. And that's basically part and parcel of the whole circle of life.

Rae: I've never actually heard somebody say that. Like, even if you're a vegetarian, even if you're a vegan, there's a loss of life that's happening, right? Because plants are alive, because worms are alive, because insects are alive. That's interesting.

Link - Allysse - 0:26:10

[The sound of chooks/hens chatting and clucking, the quiet grunting of a pig, the slight rattle of a gate or shed door in the wind. The sound of the chooks, particularly, carries through under Allysse's voice.]

Allysse: Thanks, Wes. It's early morning and I'm standing by a small farm somewhere in Gloucestershire, um, as I'm cycling about. You might hear there's a road in the distance, um, but mostly there are chickens, couple of pigs, some goats and, ah, a horse, too. And loads of birds. But anyway, time to carry on with the issue.

We continue with another excerpt from "Ode to Sheep", this time listening to Elena - a born leader reminiscent of her Southern Pacific tribes - as she chats about her family and early experiences of sheep. Elena recounts how the land and the farm of her relatives brought connection to her in her youth. She found a sense of freedom in the landscape and lifestyle but also learned about the reality of farming - from maggots to butchering an animal to eat.

This is something that resonates with me as it echoes many of my own childhood memories on my grandparents farm. I, too, experienced the freedom to roam in between farm tasks, one experienced differently from the children of the village. Feeding the sheep was especially exciting. [Pig grunts] My cousins, brother, and I all cared for the lambs, bringing milk bottles for the ones rejected by their mothers or whose mothers had died. But it was also always clear that those animals were not pets and would instead end up in our freezers and plates. Roasting a sheep was a time of celebration and togetherness. [Slight wind distortion] The entire extended family would gather and we would celebrate the age old tradition of harvest and food in our cupboards.

[Rooster crows, hens mutter, pig grunts. The sounds gradually fade out under guitar music of the next piece]

Memories of Sheep Farming - Elena Higgins & Rae Garringer on Country Queers - 0:28:33

[Simple guitar fingerpicking fades in and out]

Elena: [Speaks a greeting in Māori - not yet transcribed here.] So, greetings to everyone, thanks for tuning in. My name is Elena Higgins. I come from the waters of Aotearoa. I am of Ngāpuhi and Rereahu [?] tribes on my father's side who is Māori, Indigenous to the land of New Zealand. And my mother is Sāmoa. So I am half Māori and half Sāmoan. I was born and bred in New Zealand, I have three families including my New Zealand Pākehā/White family who I grew up with. So very strong and three cultures. It was important for my foster family, who - just for this interview and when I talk about my families, I say this to help you kind of understand, but everyone is mum, dad, brother, sister. So, I have 11 siblings. Um, I'm the oldest in my father's family and the oldest in that generation. I am the middle child in my, ah, mother's family - that's biological. And in my, my *family*-family, I call family, I'm, I'm the baby. So, when I was 26, I jumped on a boat of a friend who was the first mate of the ship, ah, a cargo ship. So, jumped on that ship, went to Australia. So it took six days to get across the Tasman, and lived in Australia for the next ten years.

Rae: I'm curious about sheep, maybe your earliest memories of sheep?

Elena: Yeah, so, you know, I'm one of those people that takes a long time to get things, so it wasn't until being here, and my cousin - who I see now as my sister, like, we're sisters and she's my cousin - we grew up together, so whenever I was staying with my dad, my cousin Gabby [?] would be there. And my dad has all boys - five boys, four are living. And you know I had no relationship with my brothers and so there would be my cousin, and we just did so much together. And she came from a sheep farm. Her father was the sheep manager and so one of the joys in staying with my father was Gabby would be there. And when I was twelve we would go to her place which was out in [King Country](#). And one of the joys I had - probably the greatest memories and joys - was always running around, in the tractor, particularly in lambing season. And it was the first time - being in urban concrete living - going down to King Country, being in the wilderness. Huge lands. In the back of the tractor, with these rolling hills. Making sure, during lambing season, the ewes and the lambs were OK. And that was my greatest memory.

And also, growing up in my preteen/teen years, probably the place of connection was being out on the farm. Being with my cousins and their family, my auntie and uncle, and just this rural living, you know, out on the sheep farm, and... You know, probably the least favourite thing was when it was docking season time and shearing the sheep. Like, I wouldn't shear the sheep, ah, there'd probably be no sheep left! - but having to do all the sweeping. And the sweeping was fine but not when it was, um, their bums, all the sheep dags. Coz I always remember the maggots. And I loved watching my cousin coz, it was just, you know, like city girl versus farm girl where it was, just wasn't an issue where I was totally grossed out. Like, watching all the maggots crawl out of the bums and all the dags and things like that. And trying to be cool, doing what she was doing, too. But I was really grossed out!

But I look at that fondly because it was a sense of freedom being on the farm. You know. The green open spaces, the rolling hills, the fresh air, and the freedom, the freedom of that. So that was my first farming experience and also as I would go back, I remember watching the sheep butchered and [being] totally mortified. I remember when we went to sit down and eat that day, we ended up eating lamb. And I, it's like, "Is this - where did this come from?" And my auntie calmly said, and proudly, "Oh, from the sheep you butchered." And, you know, I became a vegetarian for six months after that. You know my auntie was trying to say to me, "But you go to the shop, you go to get it," but, you know, it was just that whole traumatic experience of seeing that. But I'm also grateful for all of that. And I'm also grateful of that experience for the farmers, our agricultural industry of, you know, back to the land - of how *hard* it is working and being on the land. And I have a great respect for that today because of my experiences being on the land when I was a teenager, when I'd be staying with my cousin.

Sweeper - Emily & Jenny - 0:35:11

NB: This sweeper was recorded on the unceded Country of the GunaiKurnai People.

[The carolling calls and keening cries of many currawongs echoing through the area. Wind and wind distortion. A child makes small noises and adults respond in kind. More birdsong and wind. Footsteps. Emily says, "This is Emily," Jenny says, "This is Jenny," and Emily adds, "And you're listening to Queer Out Here." As Emily says this, all the birds stop calling. "Oh, just when they finish!" says Jenny, and Emily chuckles.]

Link - Allysse - 0:35:56

[Audio fades in - it feels suburban, with a breeze, some sounds of people and traffic moving around in the distance, a lot of little birds and the constant cooing of pigeons in the background.]

Allysse: Thanks Emily and Jenny. I'm now standing at one of my favourite spots in my neighbourhood. It's not much to speak of, it's a path between houses. There's this massive bush all along the path, and this particular spot is always full of birds. You can rarely see them, but they always sing their heart out, and I love it.

Anyway, on with the issue. The next excerpt is an interview with Frit Tam from the podcast *Chatting to a Friend* hosted by Catie Friend. Frit Tam is an award-winning outdoors and adventure filmmaker and photographer specialising in adding colour and diversity to the outdoors through adventure films and outdoors photography. In the section you're about to hear they discuss the lack of diversity in the representation of the outdoors through a short film Frit filmed called *The Wanderlust Women* showcasing Amira Patel and her mother Aysha Yilmaz.

Their chat resonated with us at Queer Out Here. After all, we started this audio zine because we could not find any audio-visual channels where we could hear about LGBTQIA+ people experiences of the outdoors in one place. We also failed at representing diversity in our early issues, too focused on White people's experiences of the outdoors. The work Frit is doing is needed. Adventure and the outdoors is too often about a White, usually man, conquering nature, when in practice there are far more people enjoying nature in far more varied ways. All of which are deserving of notice.

[The birds continue to twitter and cheep, and the sound gradually fades down under Catie's voice.]

Passion Fruit Pictures & The Wanderlust Women - Frit Tam & Catie Friend on Chatting with a Friend - 0:38:00

[The audio from Allysse's link fades down under Catie's first sentence.]

Catie: I'm going to talk to you about your filmmaking first, if I may.

Frit: Of course.

Catie: I watched your sort of seven minute film [The Wanderlust Women](#)?

Frit: Yes.

Catie: Because, and, and it's absolutely, I, I want to come onto that one first - because I *do* want to talk to you about [Jo Moseley and the standup paddleboard!](#) [Frit chuckles] But I want to talk about this one first because it kind of links into what you were just saying about people being educated, or not wanting to be educated, and people spending energy trying to educate people who don't want to. Ah, because I found it absolutely fascinating, and it's not something I'd ever seen or thought about before. And I wondered if you could tell us a little bit about it, and how you got in touch with Amira and her mum and just how it came about? And, and what is the purpose behind Passionfruit Pictures and bringing different views and different people and different areas of life into adventure films.

Frit: So, I'll start with Amira's film because that's the first thing you asked me about. So, the Wanderlust Women is a seven minute short film, as you just said, about two women called Amira Patel and Aysha Yilmaz. Um, Aisha is Amira's mother. So, essentially, I first came across them because Amira was starting to build up quite um a, a big prominence on social media as a Muslim hiker who hikes whilst wearing the veil. And I just loved her positivity, I loved that she was going out into these big, expansive places - and she flies a drone, so she would get her drone out and, um, post these really beautiful reels on Instagram of the locations that she was hiking in. And then, she essentially, long story short, set up a hiking group, because she is Muslim herself and a lot of the women who come on her hikes I think really look up to her.

Catie: Mm.

Frit: So, you know, the, the, the Wanderlust Women is, is the name of the film but also the name of Amira's, um, hiking group. So, I found out about Amira, Had followed her for a while, and whilst I was setting up Passion Fruit Pictures - so I'll come onto that for a minute. Which is that, um -

Catie: Mm.

Frit: Passionfruit Pictures is my film studio, um, that, that makes adventure films with a sole mission of adding colour and diversity to adventure filmmaking. And the purpose behind it is because, ah, as many of your listeners will probably know, we only really see a tiny sliver of the population being represented in adventure films. There is a classic trope of one particular individual, who will be a sponsored athlete, who will then get sponsored to go on this big adventure - and it will be the sort of big, epic, "I must conquer" kind of narrative. [Catie laughs] Um. And the more that I was feeling disconnected from that *myself* - as being someone who does not embody any of that classic trope - I also began to wonder about other people and very quickly found that there were plenty other adventurers and outdoors people who did not fit that mould, who I felt that their stories were just being completely ignored. So they were out there, they, some of them *were* out there doing incredible things, travelling all over the world and fulfilling that kind of, you know, "I must conquer" kind of narrative.

Catie: Mm.

Frit: But again, I never heard about them. So, a really good example of that, um, is a Japanese mountaineer called Junko Tabei, who is the first woman to have summited **Everest**. She's Japanese, and I didn't hear about her until a couple of years ago, when I was googling to try and find who the first woman was who summited Everest. You know, we all hear about Edmund Hillary who was the first man who summited Everest, and *his* story is covered in films and in books and in TV shows... but where's Junko Tabei's story? Um, and that really irked me. So, I thought, um, "I'm a filmmaker. I want to make films about, um, the adventure space and about the outdoors. So, I want to make films that resonate with me and that, um, have the narratives and, and the protagonists that, that I've been searching for."

Catie: Mmhm.

Frit: So, I also decided that, as much as I want to make big adventure films that have these sort of big, epic, um, challenges and adventures, I also wanted to promote and share the stories of people who may be working in a more localised area, but their impact is still just as strong - if not potentially bigger. And that's sort of where Amira came in, where I saw that she had essentially a following of more than a thousand Muslim women who she was taking out on hikes. And I just

thought, "This is incredible, where's her story?" She is, she has sort of, um, she's, she's been featured in quite a number of things now, but, um, when I was filming with her, um, it still felt like quite a, a, a small thing. Um, and I was just really lucky, I suppose, that I managed to get in touch with her, that she replied - [both laugh]

Catie: Always a challenge, I find!

Frit: Yes. And also, you know, at the same time I'm like, I get it, you're busy, you don't need to reply and you know this is a big time commitment and it's a bit Sort of out of the blue. To be asked to have a film made about you, um, I think can really sort of um. It can, it can, it can make people feel nervous, um, and not wholly comfortable with the idea.

Catie: Yeah.

Frit: Amira embraced it though, she was like, "Yeah that would be great, I'd love to!" And then I found out -

Catie: Especially if you might, you might wonder what is the motivation? Espe- you know as she's representing a very different, as you say, a very different slice of the outdoor space.

Frit: Definitely. I think it, it potentially might help, um, with some, um, protagonists of, of films that i want to make that I, That i'm not the classic trope -

Catie: Yes.

Frit: - of, um, the elite adventurer. Or even just, um, the, um, the main individuals who, who receive funding for adventure films. Um -

Catie: Yep.

Frit: I don't know why, I'm, I'm being so sort of cautious about -

Catie: They're grizzly bearded white men! Let's just say it! Coz they are! [Laughs]

Frit: I don't know why I was being so cautious then! I just, sometimes I find it's just, it's more concise, coz you, you have to list so many things. Like, so, young, white, able bodied, um, most likely middle class or higher class..

Catie: Yeah. Privileged, educated...

Frit: Cisgendered, heterosexual men.

Catie: Em - I was listening to [Emily Chappell being interviewed by Matt Pyecroft](#) - have you heard that, that, the interview she did?

Frit: No I haven't, that's on my list.

Catie: Oh, it's so good. It's so good. It's very powerful. And there's a lot to unpack in there, as, as the expression goes. But *she* was saying that actually - she sort of, kind of, captured how I feel about it, is that - I really like those, I really like those films, like, you know, and the books that go

with them, we all love them. You know, there's nothing wrong with saying you love watching the grizzly, you know, bearded white man doing his thing. But it's just not representative of everything that's happening.

Frit: Completely. And I've been known to say in the past that it's not that I want to eradicate or overlook their achievements because I still think that, that what they've done is really impressive and, and really inspirational. But I'm fed up and bored of only seeing the same narratives and the same characters.

Catie: Yeah. Totally.

Frit: Um, and so, until we reach a point where there is no issue with funding, where there is no issue with the diversity of narratives and faces and abilities and ages that we see, um, then my focus for Passion Fruit Pictures has to be to try and increase the diversity that we see in adventure films.

Catie: I love it.

Frit: And it, it does, it does sort of annoy me that I have to, to some degree, be exclusive. Um, you know, because I, I feel that there is a gap that needs to be bridged. Um. I'd love to live in a world where I don't have to do that.

Link - Jonathan - 0:46:18

[Sounds fade in of wind in trees, the distant carolling of Australian magpies, other smaller birds, a raven, traffic passing on a distant road, currawongs calling.]

Jonathan: I'm recording on Brayakaulung/GunaiKurnai Country in Gippsland, Victoria. [Birds squeak.] And the sun is just rising and sending these brilliant bands of orange and pink along the bottom of all the clouds. And the birds are just waking up, as you can hear. [Piercing bird calls, a car starts up somewhere not too far away.]

Continuing on the general theme of queerness in cultural media, next up is an excerpt from the podcast *Queers at the End of the World*, hosted by Nino McQuown and Nat Mesnard. This is a great queer podcast! [A car goes past in the background, birds continue to tweet.] It's not always about outdoors things, but it has really interesting analysis of all kinds of apocalyptic, dystopic, survivalist related media, from books and films to video games and RPGs. I always come out of listening to it feeling intellectually nourished! In this particular episode - *Boys in the Woods Part II* - Nat and Nino are discussing three survivalist narratives: Chris McCandless in John Krakauer's "Into the Wild", Brian Robeson in Gary Paulsen's "Hatchet", and Sam Gibley in Jean Craighead George's "My Side of the Mountain". The conversation shows how queerness, through its presence or absence, can be read into texts, and how a queer approach can encourage new interpretations.

We're going to drop you straight into the middle of the conversation, with Nino and Nat talking about how cultural and authorial preoccupations with certain archetypes of masculinity and ideas about sexuality shape how these books present nature (or, quote-unquote "the wilderness") and people's engagement with it.

[The sound of birds and the breeze continue for a while, then fade down as the next excerpt begins.]

Boys in the Woods - Nino McQuown & Nat Mesnard on Queers at the End of the World - 0:48:43

[This transcript is of a free-flowing conversation. Short interruptions of laughter and sounds of agreement have not been included.]

Nino: I think it's really threatening to him [Krakauer] for *McCandless* to be celibate and so he has to, like, bring - he has to like bring it back into a different archetype of masculinity which is this one where it's like, "Well, I don't have sex, you know, because, because like women are dangerous to my masculine energy," or something like that. You know, like. As opposed to, like, ever considering that, that he might be ace - you know, for example!

Nat: Exactly, yep. And I mean, to me it reads as something that Krakauer has been agonising about for years of his own life. And he's interpreting the behaviour of this person that he's never met through a lens of, you know, immense, like - maybe over, overanalysing of the role sex plays in people's lives, the role sex or celibacy plays in his own life and what that means for this particular, you know, kid that he's turned into a cypher for, you know, men everywhere who want to have experiences in the wild.

Nino: Yeah. And I would say, also, that that's a pretty consistent thing throughout, you know, books like this - including of course *My Side of the Mountain* and *Hatchet*. Like, there's no sex in the woods. There's like mummy falcons and, and, and Freudian hatchets but like there's no... You know, I mean they're kids books which tend not to talk directly about sex, but there's like no - they're total innocents as far as sex is concerned. They aren't thinking about it at all.

Nat: I mean, I think that may be a product too, a little bit, of when they were written? I mean, I know we see a lot more YA literature now that does address those topics more directly, but I mean, these are teenagers. And I'm curious if there's wilderness stories about teenagers that do talk about sex. Because it seems to me like there's a fear of associating sex with time in the woods. Um. And it feels a little homophobic to me? Like, it's like, it- it's like: men are in the woods, the woods experience is, um, how did Krakauer say it? You know, the, the wilderness is hot and stark and rough and there, there seems to be this paranoid fear that if the relationship is sexualised then the male author writing about the boy in the woods might be suspected to be gay.

Nino: Right. If the woods represents masculinity and the sort of wilderness adventure story is, in a lot of ways, like a, a sensual sort of body-centred story, then there's this sort of worry that the association of these feelings with this place, um, or with this idea of wildness is also sort of, kinda gay.

Nat: Yeah, yeah. I mean, it's like - there's this platonic sense of the way people enter into the woods, I think, um, in some of these books that speaks to that for me. Um, it's like, "Oh yeah, like, me and the woods, like, we're best friends. Like. There's nothing going on between us, we swear, like, we just hang out, you know? We do bro night, like... We play video games together, but that's it. Like, there's no secret love that we feel." And you're like "OK, got it!"

[Much laughter over the following exchange]

Nino: Right, I'm just going to have some rough congress with nature, but no homo!

Nat: Yeah. Rough, rough congress could mean whatever like, right?

Nino: Could just mean like, like tusslin'. You know. Tusslin' a little bit!

Nat: Just a little... Just roughin' it up! Um. I - this is, this is totally making me think of how much nature is sexualised in some explicitly, openly gay literature and media. And I'm totally thinking of Call Me By Your Name right now. It's just like, nature is gay in that movie. And it's much more of a pastoral nature. It's, like, ponds and farm country and you know, there's like people entering the water, and there's a scene that involves fruit sex - and it's just very, like, an example of the, the idea of nature feeling totally sensual and lustful and sexual just to be in. And it's, it's really gorgeous. Like, it's obviously a great example of, like, how arbitrary it is that nature is, like, denuded of that aspect in the stuff that we're talking about for this.

Nino: Well, I think it's particularly, I think it's particularly related to the kind of, like, to the survival narratives we're talking about and the idea of the wild. Like as opposed to - I mean, I mean, there, there's such a long tradition of like shepherd stories being, like, very queer you know? All the way, all the way back through the centuries. Like, you know, shepherds singing love songs to each other and pastoral poetry as this vehicle for, like "male friendship" (in scare quotes). And I think that association - like there's, there's something in there with domesticity and, um, that actually I find is one of the things about My Side of the Mountain that makes it really different for me from the other narratives is like... You know, we talked about, like, the, the recipes that Sam, um, that Sam comes up with and talks about in that book but there's also, like... One of the things that has stuck with me my whole life - you know, even after I stopped reading it constantly and sleeping with it under my pillow - but that stuck with me from that book, is the scene where Sam, um. It's like winter and he hasn't had anything green for a long time, he's just been, like, living on like the nuts he stored in his, in his little tree house. And he kills a rabbit that Frightful caught and, um, and he talks about how good the liver looks to him. He just, like, knows, he's like just, he's just like, directly wants to go for this liver so... And then he eats it and, and the kind of narrative voice is like, "I was drawn to the liver because I was Vitamin C deficient," right? And that was, that was in the liver. And, like, that was kind of for me as a kid the first time I, like, had ever kind of heard that kind of listen to your body language and seen it illustrated. And, like, the idea of, of your body knowing what you need. And that was, like, so powerful for me and stuck with me my whole life as, like, a kind of example of what if could feel like, to, like, listen to your body and know. Which of course, you know, is definitely something that I think is hard for a lot of queer people, trans people, fat people, like, generally.

Nat: Totally. I mean that is really reminding me of when we were saying that, um, in Hatchet, there were these things that Brian just knows. And in the context of Hatchet we were a little dubious that he would just know things the way he does in that story. Um, but I think there's something there that is compelling in these narratives that has to do with nature being an opportunity to listen to your body. Because the body is such a dominant presence when you're in a survival situation. And it becomes this incredible, um, site of inquiry and information. And, you know, regardless of whether or not, like, nature is being narrated in a like 'no homo' kind of way - and I don't like that aspect of these stories - I love the idea of, you know, the concept of being in the wild or an encounter with nature as being, like, an encounter with the body.

Nino: Yeah. Totally. Yeah. I, I definitely agree. And I think, and I think that is one of the really compelling and powerful sort of sites where, like, I could see, yeah, I could see, like, queer wilderness education and queer wilderness practice being, like, really powerful in a queer context. Because it can be this, like, process of, of bodily attention and, like, being in place in a more full presence/mind/body way. Um, but I think that that, too, is kind of particularly threatening to the sort of masculine archetype of, of wilderness explorer, because, like... I mean I think that's kind of what the sex thing is about. Like, if you're listening to your body in the wilderness, then like, you know, your body could be saying some scary things to you. Like, that it has desires and that it, you know, and that it's not entirely under your control and that you're not just a free individual with, you know, with total control over everything around you.

Link - Jonathan - 0:57:52

[The sounds of traffic and Australian birds fade up under Nino's last sentence.]

Jonathan: That whole episode is such a great conversation with Nino and Nat. Season 2 of *Queers at the End of the World* started in March this year, and I'm really enjoying it so far. We thought we'd drop their trailer in here as well, to give you an idea of their themes for this season. Here we go!

Queers at the End of the World Season 2 Trailer - 0:58:10

[Full transcript unavailable. The trailer includes the voices of Nat and Nino, their guests and found or archival soundbites, played over echoey drones, keyboards, rockets launching and dial up modem sounds. The theme is of "what comes after collapse" - i.e. escape, in its various meanings.]

Sweeper - Dan - 0:59:50

[Atmospheric noise fades up - the low grumble of machinery and some high pitched grating, all slightly distorted and reverberant.]

Dan: [Voice echoing] Hello! I'm Dan. I am out for a walk on the Great Southern Rail Trail in South Gippsland, Australia. Ah, I'm in a tunnel which is, ah, going underneath a highway with lots of roadworks going on, which you can probably hear in the background. [Noises increase slightly and then reduce]. Ah, and you are listening to *Queer Out Here*.

[Atmospheric noise fades down, merging with the sounds of the next link.]

Link - Allysse - 1:00:17

[The sounds of flowing water fade in as Dan's sweeper fades out.]

Allysse: Thanks, Dan. I'm now at the River Frome in Gloucestershire in England. I found a, a tiny, wincey waterfall at the river, I'm just standing here listening. And I thought it'd be a, a great place to record the next link, which talks about water.

After a lot of interviews and chats, we're now turning to music with "every beach", a piece from Helen's album song or time & distance. This song was inspired by an old demotape from a visit to Barclodiad y Gawres, a Neolithic burial chamber on the coast at Ynys Môn (Anglesey). Helen says she had good memories of the day, which were brought back to mind after reading a tweet by the climate scientist Dr Genevieve Guenther, in response to the 2019 IPCC report, pointing out that climate change will have such profound effect that "by 2100, every beach you've ever walked on will be below the waves."

I love the rhythm of the waves in the track and how the music and words become increasingly disjointed, my anxiety rising as the song drowns every beach I have ever walked on.

every beach - Helen - 1:01:54

[Waves rolling onto a beach can be heard for a couple of seconds before an energetic music comes in. You can briefly hear a beat over a high pitch tone, almost like an accelerated heartbeat before it fades. The high pitched tone fluctuates like the rhythm of waves. The sound is drawn out, creating a sense of unease.

The music lowers in volume and stops so we hear only the waves for a few seconds. A voice is layered over the sound of the waves. It says, solemnly, "By 2100 every beach you've ever walked will be under the waves."

A sweeping sound can be heard over the waves. Is it sand being blown by the wind? The water taking over the previously above water ground? Nature being swept away by human actions? The waves played backwards in an attempt to turn back time, to stop the encroaching water coming in?

The voice returns but the words are mangled, played backwards, mumbled and incomprehensible. The voice remains for most of the track, occasionally words are heard distinctly: "Under the waves."

The sweeping sound intensifies, the high pitch tone returns. We hear a sound akin to a tape machine being rewound.

The tone goes higher, almost painful to the ears. The sweeping, voice, tone, and occasional tape rewind mingle into a chaotic cacophony. It is overwhelming, like being drowned by the sound as the beach is covered by water.

Eventually the harsh, sweeping sound disappears, leaving the tones. They gradually slow and become more melodic. The voice is still running back and forward, chopped and mangled. The beat heard at the beginning returns for a few seconds.

We can hear part of the sentence spoken clearly: "Every beach you've ever walked will be under the waves" is heard one last time as the sound rises and then falls into silence.]

Link - Jonathan - 1:04:31

[A number of chooks/hens gossip together, some with higher voices, and one close by with a lower voice. In the background we can hear insects, shuffling sounds, a harsh distant bird call, and some closer-by tweets, and a vehicle in the distance.]

Jonathan: I'm recording once again in my parents' backyard on GunaiKurnai Country in Gippsland. Can hear the birds in the background and the insects, maybe some traffic and hopefully the chooks.

It's hard, sometimes, to think of the state of the world and not sink into a depression. Helen's piece is one of climate despair [a chook vocalises loudly] both a warning and observation of fact.

[The chook groans again. Jonathan says to the chook, "Thanks for your input," and chuckles. Birds tweet.]

The piece raises the question of what a person can do in the face of overwhelming issues like climate collapse, war, and oppressive political power? And usually the answer is to be part of a collective movement to resist and advocate for change, to build networks of solidarity... and that looks different for different people.

Our next piece is a final excerpt from the Country Queers podcast, with Rae interviewing Penny, who is the founder of Tenacious Unicorn Ranch - a queer, Anarchist collective alpaca ranch in Southern Colorado on Ute, Apache, and Navajo land.

[There are some quiet bumping sounds on the microphone - drops of rain.]

Like Dallas at the start of this issue, Penny's foundation and approach to farming is a political, active response to issues around her. And one thing we love about this interview is how much joy Penny has found in her ranch, in her time with the alpaca.

[The sounds of insects, soft rain and ravens calling continues for a little while, then fades under the next conversation.]

Tenacious Unicorn Ranch - Penelope Logue & Rae Garringer on Country Queers - 1:07:01

[Both voices in this excerpt are a little distorted as it has been recorded on the phone.]

Penny: I had to move out of my house because I was living in Commerce City in Denver and I was - the, the threats became routine, and I just was kind of in fear of my life, like, really. And so I moved back to Longmont. Um and... and, I, I got a job at Target. Like, I kind of just wanted to heal a little bit and have, like, no pressure - like, being a broker is extreme amounts of pressure and so I just kind of, ah, was waiting to get surgeries and stuff, and, you know, just kind of... I, I was a line manager at Target and just kind of you know experimenting with really dating for the first time and all these things.

Rae: Mm.

Penny: Going through my second teenage years, as it were.

Rae: Mmhm

Penny: And, ah, and then Trump got elected. And that... um... I mean, having watched societies collapse first hand, I saw all of the warning signs that was Trumpism. So I started gathering good people around me. And I started the process of selling my house in Denver in order to make a

haven, a, a safe place for queer people. And so, like, it was, it was kind of just like a reactionary “we gotta do something”.

Rae: Mm.

Penny: And then an opportunity to get a ranch in Livermore came up, ah, to rent a ranch in Livermore. And I'd, I'd wanted alpaca, like for a minute, but never had the, like, the ability to justify getting alpaca.

Rae: [Laughs] Totally!

[Unclear sentence due to laughter and poor phone reception]

Penny: Um, but then we got 40 acres in Livermore, Colorado. Um. And I had been talking at that point to a couple that was retiring and, like, their herd was becoming a little bit too much for them, but they wanted it to stay together. And so I inherited 72 alpaca from this couple. And then we launched from there. The Tenacious Unicorn Ranch was born in October of 2018, and we ah, and we've just been running forward ever since, trying to make it work, you know?

Rae: I guess I'm curious, you said kind of, like, you'd wanted to get alpacas for a while but you didn't have a reason too really -

Penny: Mmhm.

Rae: And I wondered - where did that start? Did you meet an alpaca? Did you just read about them? Like, how did you get this idea that you wanted to raise alpacas?

Penny: So, it, it's this weird thing, right? So, I'd never been introduced to them but at my church when I was about 7 or 8 there was a, ah, a family that was doing missionary work, um, in Peru. And they brought back photos of these fucking mystical creatures, called alpaca! [Both laugh] And I had never seen anything like that in my life. Like, my mum is Armenian, so like, camels, sure, I understand a camel. But an alpaca... is like an adorable camel! It's everything you want a camel to be.

Rae: [Laughs] Right! It's furrer and shorter... [continues laughing as Penny speaks]

Penny: - shorter, and not as threatening and like, um, and adorable. [Unclear] Like, during the festivals they dress them up and like. Yeah, no, it's just like everything you want a camel to be, um. And I, I'd never met one, it was just fascinating to me. And so it was just kind of always in the back of my mind, like alpaca, you know? Like, if I could ever make that work, like... [Both laugh]

Rae: And now you have! You have almost 200 of them.

Penny: And now I have 200 of them, yeah.

Rae: That's incredible! [Laughs] And then, um, I never got spat on by a llama as a kid - my mom did once, which I thought was funny. But, um, so can you just talk about their spitting? Coz I feel like it's a thing that - so people who might listen who've never been an alpaca or a llama or a camel, um, spitting is such a part of how they communicate with each other. And it's so different to so many animals

Penny: Yeah.

Rae: I just wonder if there's stuff you can say about that?

Penny: People get, ah, people get weird around the, ah, animals spitting on them. [Both laugh] So, I mean, I've been - so you, you learn right away when you start with alpaca that it's not like saliva that they're spitting at you, it's actually regurgitation that they're spitting at you. Like it is, ah, it is essentially bile that they're spitting at you. [Rae laughs] And it smells thusly. Um, I have been coated in it many times. When you have as many as we do and you, like, go through shearing, or feeding even - because it is a pecking order thing, they use it to be, like - it, it's their way of being like, "fuck off!" you know? Like, they just start spitting! [Rae laughs] It's a clear message!

Rae: It's very clear communication, it's true!

Penny: Yeah, it is the most direct you can get. And yeah, it's gross, but also, you know, it's just part of who they are and how they - you, you said it very well: it's how they communicate. It's a way for them to let you know that they're uncomfortable or scared with what you're doing, or what's going on, or what the situation is. Um, some of them, like I have alpaca that have never spit at all. Like, ever. And then I have alpaca that, it's, like, their go-to move - it's how they say hi, when they're happy they spit, when they're mad they spit. Like, it is just their go-to move. And that's, like, you love 'em all the same. But yeah, it's pretty vile. Like, it's, it, it has a smell that doesn't ever truly wash out of your clothes. [Rae laughs] [unclear] just kind of deal with it. You know?

Rae: Yeah.

Penny: Um, it's, they will - like, an alpaca does not care - like, they will spit directly in your face. They will just look you in the eye and spit directly in your mouth. [Both laugh] They don't care! Ah, they - it, it is ten levels of gross. But, um, it's just gross, you know, at the end of the day -

Rae: Yeah, slightly fermented or something -

Penny: Right? Yeah. It's just, it's well fermented grass. Like, you paid for it, you might as well enjoy it. [Laughter] Yeah, I have many a green-stained shirt and, you know, it's just part of, part of raising alpaca. It, it is less [prevalent] than people I think fear? But, um, once you catch that first wad in your face... like, you realise, you've just gotta deal. Like, it's gonna happen and it's gross, but you can get over it.

Rae: Do they, um, do they sort of like hum to each other? I remember the llamas would make this almost like a humming noise to each other.

Penny: Yeah. We, we call it, ah, we call it "alpaca indecision". Because they go, "eh, hmm, uhh". [Rae laughs] And yeah, like, they only make that noise when they're nervous or when they're unsettled. And they use it as something of a communication, like, you'll hear a hum - like you'll hear wolves howl, and then it'll go through a valley? - it's the same with alpacas: they'll hum all the way through a herd. Um, and it's, you know, it's enchanting. When your herd is settled and you know you're doing everything right - like, they're fed, they have enough water, they feel comfortable, it's, they're silent. And that's how you know.

Rae: Mmhm.

Penny: So, um, so when they're humming I tend to, like, perk up and make sure we know what's going on. And then they also yip when they're in trouble, and that'll pass through the herd, too. They go, "Yip yip yip yip yip yip." And it's, ah, it's like their warning, um, noise. And it's pretty, that, that one's pretty incredible, too.

Rae: Will you do the hum again, and I'm going to mute myself because I was laughing too much when you did it before? The indecision? [Both laugh] It was so good.

Penny: Yeah, yeah.

Rae: I'm going to mute myself.

Penny: [imitates alpaca] "Hm? Mm. Ah? Mm. Hm."

[Acoustic guitar music fades in]

Rae: [Laughs] Thank you!

Penny: You're welcome.

[Music fades out under the sound of the next link]

Link - Allysse - 1:15:45

[Sound of gentle water, birds tweeting, people murmuring in the background.]

Allysse: I'm sitting in a cottage in the Lake District in England. I'm by the windowsill listening and watching the rainfall. There's a few people out and about walking their dogs, but I'm probably not going to walk in the hills - they're covered in clouds and my navigation skills are not that good. Instead, I'll probably explore a few museums, chill out, enjoy a coffee somewhere, something like that. But for now, I'm recording this link for Queer Out Here, so let's get back to it!

And you'd be forgiven for thinking Country Queers is all about sheep (and alpacas!) because of the episodes we've drawn on for this issue. But it's not! The podcast explores rural queer experiences across intersecting layers of identity. In the trailer for their second season you can hear the range of conversation from identities, land, colonisation, ancestral memory, race, class, belonging and what "the country" even means.

Country Queers Season 2 Trailer - 1:17:17

[Full transcript not available. The trailer features nature sounds, some music, and the voices of the six rural and small town LGBTQ+ folks featured in the next, collaborative, season of Country Queers.]

Sweeper - Mags - 1:20:34

[The sound of wind and some splashing water, along with the quiet, honking chatter of swans, ducks and geese. Wind distortion. A child squeals. Distant sound of traffic or planes. An adult says to the child, "Oh, look at these geese!"]

Mags: Hi, I'm Mags, and I'm currently in Kensington Gardens in London.

[Child squeals again.]

Mags: And you're listening to Queer Out Here.

[More ambient sound. The child yells, "Come here! Come here! [Indistinct] run away! Come here!" Soft footsteps fade in, merging us to the next link.]

Link - Allysse - 1:21:15

[Footsteps, traffic, wind distortion, birds.]

Allysse: Thanks, Mags. It wouldn't be a proper issue of Queer Out Here without you.

For this next link, I'm sitting by a field not very far from work, on one of the many roads I like to take on my lunch break. And I thought I'd take you with me, following along in my footsteps. It felt fitting to introduce our next piece, our final one.

We join Dr Kate Grarock as she records an outing near Canberra, on Ngunnawal Country. Kate immerses the listener into nature around her, stopping to admire the flora and listen to the fauna. This piece is an audio edit of [a video from Kate's YouTube channel](#) simply named Kate Grarock. We highly recommend you check the original video for added visuals - we'll link it in the show notes.

[Footsteps on gravel and grass.]

I love the weaving in and out of Kate's voice through the recording. I am transported to another place via the field recordings, a moment of pause in my usual more urban environment, and Kate's voice adds to the picture, enriching my experience by explaining the sounds.

[Footsteps and traffic]

Native Flora and Frogs of Canberra - Kate Grarock - 1:22:56

[Piano music fades in.]

Kate: G'day I'm Kate Grarock, how are you? Today we are on beautiful Ngunnawal country on Mount Ainslie, and we're going to go for a walk and a bit of an explore. [Piano fades out.] It's

spring, so all the birds and, ah, flowers are blooming and it's just such a beautiful time to be out about in Canberra.

[Dog barks in the background.]

And you might hear I've got my little buddy with me. Lupo, my little dog Lupo is coming with me today and he's pretty excited because he can smell some kangaroos.

[Footsteps in a puddle, leash jingling, followed by walking on a dirt track with wind in the leaves. The sounds fade as Kate and Lupo stop.]

This is a shingleback lizard or a stumpy tail, and you can see his head looks very similar - Wooohoo! That's cool! [Kate laughs - the lizard has just made a lunge to bite her!] His head looks very similar to his bum, so it's like a defence mechanism. Kookaburra will come down and go for the bum not the head. Very cool. Hey buddy, I'll leave you alone. See ya.

[Chirping birds. An Australian raven calls. The background sounds fade as Kate begins to speak.]

Check this out, these leaves are quite different to the leaves of this eucalypt here. See they're sort of round? These skinny ones are actually mistletoe so this is a parasite on the tree and it's got this beautiful relationship with a bird. It produces these berries, these red berries that are really, really sticky, and the mistletoe bird *loves* them. Mistletoe bird eats all the berries and then, when he goes to do a poo, they're very, very sticky, so the bird's got to wipe its bottom on tree trunks [laughs] to get the poo out. And that's how they get placed up there, and that's how they tap into the tree.

[Kate resumes walking. Frogs in the background. Lupo is in the water and shakes themselves out. We can hear their collar and wet hair.]

[To Lupo] Come on, what are you doing? Come on. Out!

[Frogs call in the background.]

Now this is a cute little dam that's filled up in the bit of rain that we've had and there's a whole heap of frogs that I can hear calling here. And the coolest thing about frogs is that every species has a different call, and so just by sitting here quietly I can work out what species there are. You hear that one like marbles? [Kate mimics the call of the frog.] That's [Crinia signifera](#), the common eastern froglet. And in the background, I'm not sure if you can hear it, one of my favourite birds is the black cockatoo. [Kate mimics the black cockatoo cry, a little like a squeaky hinge] You can hear them sort of up here. There's another one I can hear that's going "bababup" and that's [Limnodynastes tasmaniensis](#) or the spotted marsh frog. [Frogs] "Bababup" - that guy. And then you can also hear one that's like a creaking door like "rah, rah". [Frogs] Yeah, that's him. And that's, ah, [Crinia parinsignifera](#) - like a creaky frog or something, I'll call him that.

[Limnodynastes tasmaniensis calls again]

"Bababup!"

[Kates starts walking on a dirt path. Soon, the wind can be heard rustling the leaves in trees and the long grass.]

This is a beautiful leopard orchid and these are just magnificent. And this time of year, in spring, just, every week I come out and there's a different orchid flowering. So precious.

[The wind is still blowing gently in the leaves and grass. A few insects buzz past the microphone. Birds carry on singing in the distance, including the black cockies. The leash jingles. Birds call nearby.]

So this little guy here is a kangaroo apple, or bush tomato. And so it's got these beautiful purple flowers on it and then it has this sort of a round fruit that looks like a tomato. When they're green they're actually poisonous so, uh, yeah, obviously not one to mess around with! But it is a beautiful traditional food that we have here in Australia.

[Birds and the faint sound of gently moving vegetation. A raven's melancholy call rings out.]

This has to be one of my favourite plants at the moment, it's austral indigo and you can see these beautiful purple pea flowers. And the First Nations people actually use it, crush it up a bit and put it in the water body and it would, um, stun the fish or kill the fish and they'd all rise to the surface and so it's pretty amazing little, um, useful and beautiful plant. I've actually planted some in my backyard because I just think it's so gorgeous.

[Footsteps on a dirt track, birds and wind.]

Check out this beautiful hollow-bearing tree behind me. Now these are so important in Australia. We have something like over 300 species are dependent on hollows for nesting, that's like sugar gliders, possums, and many, many native birds. But in Australia we don't have anything like woodpeckers that can create these hollows, so it's all dependent on natural process of rot and decay. And that can take years - 50, 100, 150, 200 years - for some hollows to form that are big enough for some of our bigger animals, like our powerful owls which [are a] *huge* native owl species. And, um, you know there's a lot of competition for these and things like introduced honeybees can get in there and, um, take over nests. I've even seen ones with native parrots inside with the bees have taken over and killed the, killed the parrot and the, the eggs and so... these old trees like this, that have these hollows, are just so important for our wildlife.

[Footsteps on dirt path. Kate clicks her tongue to Lupo.] This way!

Beautiful little yam daisy.

[Wind in grass and leaves, footsteps]

Well, I've just popped onto a section of the Centenary Trail. So, Canberra has this big long walking track - I think it's about 145 kilometres - that goes pretty much from all the way in the north Canberra around to the south and back up to the north. And it's just this beautiful trail that goes through all our nature reserves. There's only one camping site on there. But yeah, I've been sort of section hiking over the last few years and there's... it's just a really cool way to see different parts of Canberra that, you know, that I'd never normally get to.

[Water flowing over rocks. Flies.]

This is a native cherry so it looks quite different to many of our native plants and almost looks like it doesn't belong. But there's this beautiful little fruit, you can see this fleshy part with a seed on the

end and that's a native cherry. Now I don't think that's quite ripe, they turn quite red. I was also reading that the sap on this tree was used by the First Nations people to treat snakebite and that's just incredible.

[Birdsong, rosellas chatting to each other. Little peeping birds.]

Alright, I'm almost back at the car. Thank you so much for watching. Huge shout out to my subscribers and my members, thank you so much for your support. Ah, I hope you guys are doing well and happy hiking!

[Bush sounds fade out as soft waves on shingle fade in]

Conclusion - Allysse and Jonathan - 1:31:11

[Soft waves on a shingle beach can be heard under the following, sometimes getting louder and closer, sometimes further away.]

Jonathan: And that's a wrap for Queer Out Here Issue 07. It's been a long time coming! We hope you've enjoyed hearing from so many brilliant queer voices and that you take the time to go and check out the full conversations, podcasts, channels and albums that we've featured here - all the links are in our show notes at queerouther.com/listen.

Allysse: A big thank you to all the wonderful people who have accepted to have their work showcased in this issue of Queer Out Here. Dallas Robinson as well as Nico Wisler and Dylan Heuer at Queer the Table on the Heritage Radio Network; Rae Garringer at Country Queers with Wesley Godden, Elena Higgins, and Penelope Logue; Catie at Chatting with a Friend and Frit Tam; the folks over at Queers at the End of the World - Nino McQuown and Nat Mesnard; Helen for her music; and Dr Kate Grarock for her hike in Australia. And of course, another huge thanks to our sweeper contributors: Esther, Emily, Jenny, Dan - and Mags, who has been submitting audio since the very start of this audio zine.

Jonathan: If this issue has left you wanting more, you can find heaps of queer and/or outdoorsy and/or audio-centric content on the inspiration page on our website - queerouther.com/inspiration. A few shows you might want to check out, which aren't included in this issue, are the Polyculture Podcast, Off Track, Transcripts, Short Cuts, Nocturne, Gender Reveal and Out There.

Allysse: We will be returning to our usual format for our next issue, so if you have an idea for an interview, trip report, piece of music, sound experiment, poem, essay, conversation or field recording you'd like to submit, why not start working on it now? We'll open for submissions later this year.

Jonathan: So, all that remains now is to say thanks to you for downloading and listening to Queer Out Here. If you have a moment, we'd love to know what you enjoyed about this episode over on Twitter or Facebook. Ah, you can also sign up for our very infrequent emails - the link's on our [website](#). But mostly, we just like that you are listening and sharing the audio zine with other people. So, keep it up! . . . And now from me, Jonathan -

Allysse: - and me, Allysse -

Both: Goodbye!

[The sound of waves on shingle beach fades out.]